

## November 16, 2015, BLT Agenda Item Comments

Comments on the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees (BLT) agenda items submitted by:

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### ***Item V.A. Minutes of the October 19, 2015 Board of Library Trustees Meeting***

**Page 1:** Item I (“Staff Present”): “CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Chair King called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Children’s Theater Room of the Mariners Branch Library.” [note: I’m not sure of the correct name for the room, but I think the location of the meeting should be indicated in the minutes]

**Page 1:** Item II (“Staff Present”): “... ; Principal Civil ~~Principal~~ Engineer Fong Tse; Deputy Public Works Director/~~Civil City~~ Engineer Mark Vukojevic; ...”

Note: I believe the official titles of Mr. Tse & Vukojevic are as shown (“Principal Civil Principal Engineer” and “Deputy Public Works Director/ City Engineer”). If so, the same correction is needed at several other points in the draft minutes. Specifically, for Mr. Vukojevic on page 4 in paragraphs 5 and 6 from the end, on page 5 in paragraphs 5 and 8, and 5 from the end; and for Mr. Tse on page 5 in paragraphs 2 and 4 from the end.

**Page 1:** Item IV, paragraph 2: “Joy Brenner offered corrections to the minutes from the Board of Library ~~Trustee~~ Trustees meeting of September 21, 2015.”

**Page 1:** Item IV, paragraph 3: “Jim Mosher commented on the Library Monitoring list and suggested the Board add discussion of the City’s vision for the future of libraries to ~~it’s~~ its annual review list.”

**Page 2:** Item VI, paragraph 1: “He recommended adding a brief survey ~~on the Library website to the CASSIE computer reservation logout~~ so that the public can provide comments as to how their experience could be improved.”

**Page 3:** paragraph 3: “\*Item No. 8 was moved up to this point on the agenda as there were many members of the public present to speak on same.” [note: it would be normal to adjust the minutes to reflect this – that is, to move the Item 8 discussion text to this point, following the note]

**Page 6:** paragraph 3: “By vote, it was agreed by the Board that Option 3 was their first choice and Option 2 their second.” [note: the Brown Act requires the votes of individual Board members to be publicly announced. It would seem a good idea for the minutes to more completely record what was announced. I believe each Trustee indicated a first and second choice.]

**Page 6:** Item 9, last paragraph: “City Arts Commissioner Chair Greer noted that the available space dimensions are 80 inches by 40 inches.” [should that be “**available**” or “**required**”?]

## ***Item 1. Customer Comments***

The October comments seem very limited.

As noted in my correction suggested to page 2 of the draft minutes, at the last BLT meeting I suggested adding a non-mandatory opportunity for customers to answer a single focused multiple choice question (or possibly one of a rotating series of questions) of current interest to the Trustees or staff at the *end* of the library's CASSIE computer sessions, and also a more open-ended opportunity to comment on their experience. My reason for suggesting it come at logout was that patrons would seem more likely to have experienced something they might want to comment on at that point. However, I recognize it may be technologically problematic, both because at logout they are likely to be in hurry to leave, and because others may be waiting to use the terminal or laptop. On reflection, perhaps the question should be offered at *login* (which seems especially easy since there is already a login screen with disclaimer information), with a more open-ended invitation to comment coming at logout.

I believe such an effort, however implemented, has the potential to generate a larger volume of responses than the current comment card system. I also think it would provide staff and the Trustees with *better* information, giving them a feel for how the average patron views the library experience, and what they would like to see, compared to the existing system which tends to capture only either very good or very bad experiences.

## ***Item 2. Library Activities***

I am very pleased to see the report on page 1 regarding library staff's October 14<sup>th</sup> administrative "retreat" – which oddly does not seem to have been mentioned in the Director's oral report at the last BLT meeting. I am especially pleased to see this evidence of sincere thought about the future of the NBPL system.

I am also pleased to see that even prior to, and completely independent of my October 19<sup>th</sup> comment (mentioned in Item 1, above), the administrative staff had been considering an increased use of surveys to "*Evaluate the customer experience.*" It might be cautioned, however, that the public can easily be over-surveyed, and that surveys are most effective (and probably better received) if questions are asked only when prior to asking them there is a realistic commitment and capability to take action as a result of the answers.

Staff's suggestion to insert survey questions as a part of logging in to the library website (presumably to access "My Account" or the "eLibrary") is a good complement to mine about making them part of the CASSIE process for using public terminals and laptops (especially since many CASSIE and WiFi users may not use their devices to visit the library website). However, to capture *all* the NBPL website visitors it would probably be necessary to insert something like a pop-up on first reaching the library URL, which many might find intrusive and off-putting.

It might be noted that the [Quest](#) system on the City's main website presents users with a voluntary comment form after they submit their request. It might be helpful to ask if that has proven useful to City staff. Personally, since I have never had a response to any of the

comments I have provided, I have the impression the comments are not read and have given up commenting.

### ***Item 3. Expenditure Status Report***

The present one-page report is lacking an explanation of what period it represents. The agenda refers to it as the “**2015-11-16 Financial Report**” but it couldn’t really represent expenses through November 16<sup>th</sup> (the date of the meeting) since it must have been printed some days in advance.

In addition, the report could be enhanced by restoring the column that used to show the YTD expenditures as a percent of budget. That called attention (although not always accurately) to areas in which expenses were running ahead or behind plan.

The report could also be greatly enhanced if it were possible to provide a few words calling the Trustee’s (and the public’s) attention to any items of special interest.

### ***Item 5. Corona del Mar Branch Library Project Interior Layout and Exterior Design***

It is good to see staff coming back to the Board for direction, but slightly confusing since I thought, as the October 19<sup>th</sup> minutes memorialize, that the Trustees had given enough direction in Item 8 at that meeting for staff to take the matter to the City Council.

Simply saying staff is resubmitting the same report, drawings and requests seems inadequate to inform the public or the Trustees as to why and in what respects a different result is expected.

In a loosely related matter, the board might be interested to know that WLC Architects appears to be involved in the design of a replacement fire station in Costa Mesa, and will be presenting two exterior concept drawings at a [neighborhood meeting](#) in Costa Mesa being held at essentially the same time as the current BLT meeting.

### ***Item 7. Corona del Mar Branch Library Project Update***

I find it interesting that for another somewhat similar upcoming public works project – the proposed [West Newport Community Center](#) – City staff has issued a [Request for Proposals](#) (No. 16-16) from professional fundraisers who might be able to design a campaign to secure \$10 million of funding that might be needed above the roughly \$15 million allotted in the normal City budget. I don’t recall the City Council having given direction for that effort or anything similar having been discussed with regard to the CdM Library reconstruction.

***Item 8. Placement of Art Donated from Gene and Diane Dixon Crain in Honor of Joan Brandt Scarboro and Clark Scarboro***

I believe the location of the wall under consideration is such that the first photo of Attachment A was taken looking northwest with the second floor restrooms immediately to the right. But a “*You are here*” type overhead site location map would have helped to make the location of the photos more obvious.

Painting that wall a darker shade may indeed help to accent the otherwise very pale and low contrast Joan Irving painting, but I’m not sure it will ever pair well with the other.

Throughout this I have had some trouble understanding exactly what about Joan Brandt Scarboro and Clark Scarboro is being honored or recognized. Perhaps the plaque will explain, but I would think a plaque explaining who Rex Brandt and Joan Irving Brandt were, and their relation to the history of Newport Beach, would be more in keeping with the informational role of the NBPL.

***Item 9. Appointment of Two Board of Library Trustees to Assist Staff on the Library Budget***

It might be noted that unless the job assigned to the two liaisons is confined to reporting back to the full Board with advice based on their interactions with staff, then all their meetings need to be noticed and open to the public. In other words, as a non-publicly meeting entity they cannot give direction to staff based on a claim they represent the views of the Board as a whole unless the Board has instructed them, at a public meeting, what message to convey.